

Proposed Changes – Intern Development Program Phase 1 Streamline and Phase 2 Overhaul

PROPOSED CHANGE TO IDP – PHASE 1: STREAMLINE

WHAT IS THE PROPOSED CHANGE?

This proposed change will allow interns to complete IDP upon documenting completion of the **core hour requirements**. Currently interns must document 3,740 hours in 17 different experience areas to meet the “core” hour requirements of IDP; however, to complete the program they need to document an additional 1,860 hours in any of the 17 experience areas. This proposed change would, for the first time since the inaugural year of IDP, require interns to satisfy only the core hour requirements to complete their internship – a total of 3,740 hours.

WHY SHOULD THIS CHANGE BE IMPLEMENTED?

Removal of the elective hour requirement will reduce complexities while ensuring that intern architects still acquire the comprehensive experience that is essential for competent practice, and result in a program that is both justifiable and defensible. This proposed change is designed to reflect how the marketplace, education, and technology have all impacted ways in which experience is gained. Upon final approval, this change would take effect in early 2015.

The NCARB Board of Directors preliminarily approved the following revisions to modify the IDP “Reporting Requirements” for Member Board comment:

Modify the IDP Guidelines, December 2013 and remove all references to the elective hour requirements. This will include:

- *Removal of definition of elective hours, page 12*
- *Removal of elective hours required to complete the program – page 12*
- *Removal of references to supplemental experience for elective hour credit – Pages 13 and 18 - 20*

RATIONALE

Focus on Program Requirements Outlined in Practice Analysis

The data resulting from the Internship Survey of the 2012 NCARB Practice Analysis of Architecture informed the appropriate distribution of core hour requirements among the IDP experience areas. However, the data will not and never has been used to inform the elective hour requirements. Therefore, it should be noted that the current internship program contains a substantial elective requirement that is not informed or guided by data. Furthermore, considering the inherent “elective” nature of the additional elective hours, there can be no proof that this requirement ensures any level of competency or greater protection of the health, safety, and welfare of the public. It simply

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ensures more time in internship, not necessarily more quality or broader experience. The requirements of internship should be governed by content (as outlined in the *Practice Analysis*), not time.

Additionally, the Practice Analysis data strongly suggests that practitioners do not view supplemental experience as an acceptable alternative to on-the-job performance. Removal of the elective hour requirement will call for the elimination of supplemental experience opportunities that qualify for elective hours. The Board determined that supplemental experience that counts for core hours should remain and called for a renewed focus on improving the value of supplemental experience.

No Evidence (Historical or Contemporary) that Elective Hours Ensure Greater Competency and Further Promote Protection of HSW

As defined in the *IDP Guidelines*, core minimum hours are “the minimum number of hours you must earn in a given experience category or area.” Elective hours are “experience hours that exceed the 3,740 core minimum requirement.” There is no stipulation for specific experience areas in which elective hours must be earned, so interns can potentially complete the program by documenting all of their elective hours in a single experience area. Interns can also meet their elective hour requirement by documenting excess community service and completing supplemental experience. Neither one of these options guarantee greater competency or increased protection of the health, safety and welfare of the public.

In addition, since there is not a requirement that calls for the distribution of elective hours, it can be assumed that the core hours are the hours required to actually obtain minimal competency in a given experience area. Thereby, documenting the completion of the core hours should establish an intern’s requisite competency in all of the current 17 experience areas.

Advances in Technology and Practice

IDP is the standard accepted means of meeting the experience requirement of most NCARB Member Boards. However, the last 40 years has seen an evolution in technology and practice. In the 1970s and 1980s interns and architects could spend significant time completing tasks that the interns and architects of today can complete in minutes or even seconds. In the 70s and 80s interns and architects would spend hours utilizing a pencil and draft paper to complete what was then a manual process. The introduction of CAD, BIM, and other digital resources has changed the game. Interns and architects are exposed to more substantial concepts sooner, make higher level decisions earlier, and produce a more detailed product in less time than ever before. And while technology has drastically sped up the process in which an architect conducts his/her work, the program requirements for internship have not evolved. The Board of Directors believed this evolution of technology and practice warrants a fresh look at the total hours required to complete IDP

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and ultimately determined that the *core hours* are the *experience hours* that ensure competent practice.

PROPOSED CHANGE TO OVERHAUL IDP – PHASE 2

WHAT IS THE PROPOSED CHANGE TO OVERHAUL IDP?

The current program includes four (4) experience categories and 17 experience areas. This proposed change calls for development of a new IDP framework in which an intern would be required to document hours in six (6) experience categories only that directly align with the six phase-based areas of contemporary practice; practice management, project management, programming & analysis, project planning & design, project development & documentation, and construction & evaluation. In addition, interns would no longer be required to document hours in numerous experience areas within a given category. Instead, these six categories would include recommended tasks that would qualify for credit as well as a guideline for the “appropriate” amount of diversified experience.

WHY SHOULD THIS CHANGE BE IMPLEMENTED?

Modifying the IDP framework and requiring interns to document their experience within six (6) categories that directly align with the six phase-based areas of architecture will reduce complexity and align with the current realities and challenges of contemporary practice; all while ensuring intern architects still acquire the comprehensive experience that is essential for competent practice. This proposed change is designed to reflect how the marketplace, education, and technology have all impacted ways in which experience is gained. Upon final approval, this change would take effect in mid to late 2016

Note - The NCARB Board of Directors preliminarily approved the concept of aligning the IDP experience categories with the phase-based categories of contemporary practice, but details of the transition will be dependent upon approval from the membership and subsequent work of the Internship Committee.

RATIONALE

Alignment of Programs with Contemporary Practice

Changing the framework of IDP from four (4) Experience Categories and 17 Experience Areas to six (6) Experience Categories aligns the program with the same developmental structure as the ARE. As NCARB works to better integrate the programs for licensure, it is useful and efficient when all programs build from the same foundation. A better aligned series of programs allows each program, whether it be IDP or ARE, to utilize the same

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foundation but focus developmentally on each program's purpose. IDP is meant to ensure that experience is gained completing tasks, while the ARE ensures that an actual level of knowledge is acquired. Therefore, IDP and ARE can now focus on specific experience aspects and specific testing aspects respectively using a standardized, mutually accepted set of topics.

Broader Focus

The current 17 experience areas of IDP, in combination with their respective minimum hour requirements, reflect an extremely specific and detailed format that keeps internship focused on the details rather than the broader picture. The level of detail required by both the intern, the IDP supervisor, and the mentor relegate the current internship process to more of an accounting practice rather than a true learning experience. A move to a broader IDP that focuses on capturing the “big picture,” will allow the intern to more freely explore learning opportunities within the office or on a particular project, rather than maintaining a primary focus on checking-off a box and poring over timesheets.

Increased Flexibility

The current practice of architecture involves a greater variety of activities, building types, practice types, and projects than ever before. This degree of variety in practice requires a greater level flexibility in any standardized approach to licensure. Since no two interns are likely to have the same experience over the course of their internships, the IDP must be able to adapt to this variety. A program that focuses on the over-arching six phase-based experience areas subsequently accommodates and welcomes the current variety in the profession and encourages interns to embrace it. Interns will no longer be pressured into conforming their internship to the IDP. Rather, the IDP will allow their internship to take a more natural and organic direction, indicative of the reality of today's practice.

Improved Usability and Understanding

The current IDP requires an extensive understanding of the program rules and requirements in order to effectively and efficiently progress through the program. The high volume of experience areas (17), and their complementary hourly requirements, contributes significantly to the program's complexity. Furthermore, interns, IDP supervisors, and mentors must also understand the knowledge/skills and tasks associated with each of the 17 experience areas. A change to six phase-based experience categories will significantly reduce this complexity, allowing interns, IDP supervisors, and mentors a more usable and understandable program. A focus on only six phase-based experience areas delivers an internship that allows all involved to focus on the execution of internship and not the internship program itself.

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PROPOSED CHANGES TO STREAMLINE AND OVERHUAL IDP

IMPETUS FOR CHANGE

Created jointly in the 1970s by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) and the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the Intern Development Program (IDP) identifies the comprehensive experience that is essential for the independent practice of architecture. Except for the year in which the concept of IDP was formed, the requirement has always been the equivalent of three (3) years duration.

Historical research indicates that the NCARB membership, while in search of ways to prove competency through means other than a duration requirement, initially proposed what we now know as IDP as a two year requirement. This proposal was brought for a vote and successfully passed in 1971 and the NCARB Model Law was updated accordingly. However, this was short lived as in 1972 the Model Law was amended to stipulate that the program should be three (3) years in duration. Research indicates this change was brought about in an effort to comply with the requirements outlined in the laws and rules of the NCARB Member Boards. Getting “buy in” from the Member Boards was key to facilitating licensure across state borders.

Flash forward 40 years and IDP has become the standard accepted means of meeting the experience requirement of most NCARB Member Boards. However, concerns that the IDP contains extensive requirements that make it difficult for users to comprehensively understand; is overwhelmingly resource intensive to administer; and often takes interns significantly longer to complete than intended led to the formation of a multi-department special research team in April 2013. The team was tasked with thoroughly analyzing the Internship Development Program and providing the NCARB Board of Directors with an in-depth analysis of options identifying ways to streamline the experience requirement while ensuring interns acquire the comprehensive experience essential for competent practice.

The multi-departmental research team was formed to ensure that viewpoints from all areas of Council operations would be taken into consideration. In addition, leaders of the special research team facilitated focus groups with members of the Internship Advisory Committee (IAC), Education Committee, Licensure Task Force, and Intern Think Tank during FY14. The goal of these focus groups was to garner feedback from key stakeholders that could assist the team in identifying the options that our Member Boards and key stakeholders might feel most comfortable adopting. Members involved in the focus groups were comprised from NCARB, AIA, AIAS, ACSA, the Society of Design Administrators, and also included Member Board Chairs, Member Board Executives, Member Board Members, IDP Coordinators, recently licensed architects, and interns.

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An exhaustive review of historic decisions, interviews of key stakeholders, and the use of agile project management approaches has resulted in proposals that preserve the rigor of IDP, and address elements which unnecessarily complicate the process of meeting the programs' goals. These changes can be characterized as a "course correction," mindful of the many years spent by volunteers in designing programs to address concerns of Member Boards.

The Board enters into this process understanding that unanimous adoption will surely not happen immediately, and that some jurisdictions may prefer a more gradual implementation. The Board strongly feels that our work over several years of strategic planning, surveying, brainstorming, and consultation with Member Boards has laid the foundation for significant streamlining of programs and reflects the consensus of the Council's many stakeholders.